

REMARKS

The indication of allowable subject matter in claims 7, 12, and 14-21 is acknowledged and appreciated. Please cancel claims 2 and 3 without prejudice or disclaimer. In view of the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all claims are in condition for allowance.

Claims 1, 8, 13, 23 have been amended. Support for these amendments may be found in throughout the specification but particularly on page 8, lines 22-24, originally filed claims 2 and 3 and in Figures 1 and 2.

Claim 8 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. In order to expedite prosecution, claim 8 has been amended to obviate the alleged indefiniteness according to the Examiner's comments on page 1 of the Office Action of October 20, 2004. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Claims 1-6, 9, 10, 13 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentably obvious over Kaneoka et al., (JP 02-34,395) in view of applicants' admission of prior art. The Examiner opines that Kaneoka et al., teach a plate comprising a mask with an opening area and a non-opening area and a paste removing protrusion extending from the surface of the plate. Applicants respectfully disagree.

In order to expedite prosecution of the application, Applicants have incorporated the characteristics of claims 2 and 3 into independent claims 1, 11 and 23. Furthermore, claims 1, 11 and 23 have been amended such that recited the paste removing protrusions

are disposed only on the recited mask's non-opening area and therefore are not in contact with an opening area.

It remains Applicants' position that Kaneoka et al., Figures 1a and 1b constitute an upper and a lower mask (therefore reference marker 1 (far left and right of Fig. 1c) is a part of the upper mask) disposed upon one another. It does not teach a paste removing protrusion. However, even if Kaneoka et al. were to be construed to teach a paste removing protrusion, it certainly does not teach a paste removing protrusion formed *only* in a non-opening area. Rather, Kaneoka et al. teaches a second mask disposed on a first mask over a plate, where the second mask has openings that extend perpendicularly to the surface of the plate and therefore form a border of, and are in contact with an opening area. The claimed invention is different in that recites paste removing protrusions formed *only* in a non-opening area and is not in contact with an opening area.

Additionally, claim 23 has been further amended to recite a *single* paste removing protrusion formed *only* in a non-opening area. Again, it remains Applicants' position that Kaneoka et al., Figures 1a and 1b constitute an upper and a lower mask (therefore reference marker 1 (far left and right of Fig. 1c) is a part of the upper mask) disposed upon one another. It does not teach a paste removing protrusion. However, even if Kaneoka et al. could be so perceived, its upper mask necessitates at least one pair of the elements (far left and right of Kaneoka et al.'s Fig. 1c) construed by the Examiner as paste removing protrusions. As such, Kaneoka et al. cannot teach the plate of claim 23 which requires a single *single* paste removing protrusion formed *only* in a non-opening area.

CONCLUSION

Having fully and completely responded to the Office Action, Applicants submit that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance, an indication of which is respectfully solicited. If there are any outstanding issues that might be resolved by an interview or an Examiner's amendment, the Examiner is requested to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number shown below.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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